

Writing a Winning Résumé

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Writing a winning résumé is really not that difficult. All it takes is a little research on your part and a little bit of your time. The secrets of how to write a résumé which will give you the best chance to interview with a selecting supervisor are within this guide. Choose to read the information provided and arm yourself with: why you are writing a résumé; what to include in a resume; what should NOT be included in a resume; and how to avoid common pitfalls. This guide is intended for the technician hiring process only. It does not apply to AGR positions.

This guide is written by people who have read thousands of résumés and tips provided are really not secrets at all. We want everyone to know them because the better you write your résumé; the easier it is to qualify you. It takes an experienced reviewer a very short time to look at a well written résumé to determine your eligibility for an advertised position. It is the poorly written résumé, one which takes longer to review, which lessens your chance of getting your name on a certificate of eligibles and getting that interview.

WHY WRITE A RÉSUMÉ?

In the private sector, the purpose of a résumé is to exemplify a candidate's general work history, education, and perhaps to highlight notable accomplishments. In the federal government, however, a résumé is initially used to illustrate your job qualifications and particular duty experience with the purpose of becoming "certified" by the Human Resources Office (HRO) as meeting minimum eligibility requirements. This means that your résumé must include more detail than a private sector resume because the Human Resources Specialist is specifically looking for the "specialized" or directly related experience requirements of the position for which you are applying.

When writing this type of résumé, you are trying to do two things. First, you are trying to convince a stranger that you meet the minimum requirements for a position that interests you. Second, once you've demonstrated eligibility, you are letting the selecting supervisor know more about you, your job history, capabilities, and what knowledge, skills, and abilities you've acquired throughout your career.

We are not going to go in-depth on how the hiring process works. In a nutshell, when you demonstrate that you meet the minimum criteria for an advertised vacancy, your name will be placed on a Certificate of Eligibles (CoE). The CoE is then sent on to the selecting supervisor for his or her consideration. After receiving the CoE, the selecting supervisor usually has up to 30 days to do one of the following:

1. The first option is to look over the resumes and make a selection from the names provided.
2. The second option is to decide to hold interviews and make a selection once the interviews have been completed.
3. The last choice is to make no selection at all and possibly readvertise the position.

In each of these cases, a selecting official may or may not need to hold a board, depending on the number of candidates appearing on the COE.

Right now, if you believe that a well written résumé is the key ingredient in the hiring process and your initial consideration for a vacancy, then you are spot-on correct.

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY RÉSUMÉ?

Now that you understand the importance of a well written résumé, you're probably interested on tips on what to include in one. Here are some ideas:

List the vacancy announcement number and position title in the e-mail subject line (i.e. VA 10-890, NCOIC Maintenance Shop). If HRO cannot initially determine which vacancy announcement you've applied for, your application will be returned to you without consideration.

Include your e-mail address. Don't assume that HRO will simply be able to "reply" to your originating email address.

Organize your résumé in a neat manner and use spell-checker before submitting your résumé. Every little bit helps and you would be amazed at the number of applications HRO receives that cannot demonstrate even basic use of a spell check. Remember, you may be competing against several people for the position you are interested in and selecting officials are not impressed by basic errors.

Clearly separate information for each of the positions you've held during your career in chronological order. It makes it very difficult (sometimes impossible) for HRO to determine your true experience if you've merged together several different positions you have held on your application.

A few strong, well-written paragraphs may be enough to demonstrate you meet the minimum requirements of a lower rated position. However, higher graded positions may require much more information in order to meet basic eligibility. A one to two page résumé will usually suffice for most positions, but a succinct résumé should never be more than three to five pages in length.

List the title of the position you held and the months and years you held the position (i.e., NCOIC, Supply Warehouse, Jan 2007 – April 2009). When you just tell us you held a job from 2008 to 2009, is it Dec 2008 to Jan 2009 for one month of credit? Or is it Jan 2008 to December 2009 for 23 months of credit? If you don't tell us, we are unable to make a determination.

One of the most important aspects of writing a résumé is to WRITE IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS. We need to know what YOUR particular experiences, skills, and abilities are in order to determine if you meet the minimum requirements for an advertised position. We are not able to do that if you copy a job, MOS, or AFSC description, copy portions of the vacancy announcement, or if you copy another candidate's résumé. A résumé not written in an individual's own words will be returned as ineligible at

the close of the vacancy announcement with the following: “No determination of your eligibility could be made because your resume does not show that you have used your own words to describe your qualifications.”

You may be applying for a position because it best suits your skills, because it is a job you’ve always wanted, because it provides a better standard of living for you and your family, or for a myriad of other reasons. This type of job may not come around again for a very long time. Don’t take the chance of not getting your name on the Certificate of Eligibles because you didn’t take an extra hour or two to write a detailed résumé in your own words.

Send only the documents that are necessary. Send only a résumé **OR** OF 612, and send college transcripts only if it pertains to the position you are applying for. You can also send college transcripts if you need to substitute education for specialized experience and the vacancy announcement states it is allowed for that particular vacancy. Send flying records if you are applying for a pilot position. Sending numerous certificates of one or two day classes generally does not impact the quality of your résumé. Please be aware that the email system may not let through résumés that take up several MB of data. Sometimes sending only one well written page may be enough to get your name on the CoE. Other times, sending 40 pages of documents that do not demonstrate you meet the minimum criteria for the vacancy, will not be enough to get your name on the CoE. Read the entire announcement carefully and determine specific requirements prior to submitting your application.

SOME PITFALLS TO AVOID?

First, be descriptive in your résumé. Don’t just tell us you are a good mechanic. Tell us what equipment you have worked on, what parts and systems you have fixed/replaced, and what tools you can effectively use. Don’t just tell us you are a good supervisor. Tell us how many personnel you supervise, the type of work supervised, and what your accomplishments have been. Don’t just tell us you have driven vehicles for the last ten years; tell us what kind of vehicles you drove, under what conditions, and something about your safety record. Don’t just tell us you have been a Supply NCO for the last twelve years and you are good at it. Give us an idea about duties you have performed and the systems, software and automation you’ve used. Again, list each position, and the dates you performed them separately. The position you held several years ago was probably very different than the position you hold today. Describe each as specifically as possible.

Don’t fall into the trap of submitting a quick, poorly written resume because you have held a similar position for an extended period of time, or if someone has told you that you are a “lock” for an advertised position. If you do not clearly demonstrate that you meet the minimum qualifications for the position, your name will not appear on the Certificate of Eligibles though you may be in fact, the best person for the job.

We will only consider the work experience you list in the body of your résumé, OF 612, or documents that are continuations of these forms. Extra information listed in a cover letter, an e-mail, or in some other attachment will not be considered.

Occasionally, an application won't make it to our in-box. You should get a confirmation e-mail from us within two business days from your submittal. If you don't receive a confirmation e-mail, contact us at (916) 854-3358, DSN 466-3358, or CAGNET 6-3358. We will work with you to get your application properly submitted. Please do not wait until several days after the position closes to notify us that you never received a confirmation e-mail. It may be too late at that point.

It is Army policy not to allow e-mails through our server that have attachments with odd extensions (for instance, .pif, .exe, .zip, .ace, .dot, .url, just to name a few). Make it easy on yourself. Let's say that you want to e-mail us a copy of your resume, college transcripts, and an important certificate that demonstrates your knowledge on a large part of the position. Your best bet would be to take all of the documents and scan them into one PDF file and attach that to your application e-mail. Don't copy your documents into a JPG file. These files take up an extremely large amount of space and may cause your e-mail to not make it to our address.

Please look at the "AREA OF CONSIDERATION" block of the job announcement. If the vacancy announcement you are interested in states: **"CURRENT CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS/TECHNICIAN"**, then you must be in the **California National Guard** as of the closing date of the announcement or you would not be eligible for consideration for this position. If the announcement states, **"ALL SOURCES"**, any enlisted eligible or eligible military member, can apply if they meet the grade requirements. However, if selected, you must be in the California National Guard prior to appointment in the fulltime position

In the same "AREA OF CONSIDERATION" block, also look at the military grade requirements. This block will list one or more ranks. Let's say, the vacancy announcement you are looking at says "E-4 through E-7". You must be holding one of these ranks by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. All other ranks are not eligible to apply for this vacancy.

Occasionally the National Guard will advertise vacancies for civilian non-dual status positions. They can be identified with a "C" at the end of the vacancy announcement number (i.e., 10-02-045C). Most of these positions are opened to members who already hold non-dual status with the National Guard and maintain Competitive status. This status is indicated on the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, as a "1" in block 34. Usually, members are asked to send a copy of their SF 50 along with their resume to show proof of competitive status.

So there it is - several years of experience summed up in a few pages. Now go out there and write that killer résumé in your own words. I'm sure it will be just a matter of time until you get that phone call from a selecting supervisor wanting to interview you. With your skills, you are probably going to ace that interview. Good Luck!